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## Role of Library Professionals in Satisfying User Needs During Pandemic Phase

Sumaira Baba

*University of Kashmir, India, [sumairababa2524@gmail.com](mailto:sumairababa2524@gmail.com)*

Sofi Gh.Mohiuddin Jeelani

*SKAUST-K*

Dr Shabir Ahmed Ganaie

*University of Kashmir, India*

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# ***Role of Library Professionals in Satisfying User Needs During Pandemic Phase***

**Sumaira Jabeen (Research Scholar, DLIS, U.O.K)**

*(Sumairababa2524@gmail.com)*

**Sofi Gh. Mohiuddin Jeelani (Library Professional, SKAUST-K)**

*(jeelani.mlis@gmail.com)*

**Dr Shabir Ahmed Ganaie (H.O.D, DLIS, U.O.K)**

*(shabir311@rediffmail.com)*

## **ABSTRACT**

*Libraries are considered as treasures of knowledge providing access to huge variety of materials (books, journals, manuscripts, audio/visual etc.) with the help of institutions to which these (libraries) are associated. But, the preservation of such knowledge (material) is also of prime importance in order to make these resources (material) available for information seekers. In this whole process of collection, storage as well as dissemination of (knowledge), library professionals (librarians) has a great role to play. Which cannot be separated at any cost. Even at the time of pandemic, their (library professionals) role need to be very much vibrant to benefit the members (knowledge seekers) of the society. Therefore, present study attempts to focus upon the same. By conducting an online survey, to analyse “**The role of library professionals in satisfying user (Teachers, Students) needs during the pandemic situation**”. Through formulation of certain assumptions and examine whether the laid down hypothesis attain acceptance or rejection. Which leads to the appropriate results, expected beneficial for the academic excellence as well as for the development of society collectively. Further, for analysis SPSS version 20 (helps in carrying out number of observations) is used.*

**Keywords:** Coronavirus, Libraries, Information, Professionals, Pandemic, Services, User needs.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Libraries around the world are facing different situations. Mainly due to the prevalence of pandemic named as Coronavirus (*refers to a family of viruses which led to an infectious disease called as COVID-19 – or Coronavirus disease*). As a result, libraries and librarians are finding themselves in number of circumstances. Even the closure of the libraries is the ultimate resultant

of this situation. Although libraries (around the world) are working hard to provide remote access to services and collections. Which requires investment of efforts and time for incorporating computer systems, along with up-gradation of websites. In order to deal with the prevailing demands. No doubt, some of the libraries show strong digital presence. While as, some are attempting to move in such direction (examples are “*National Library and Information Service of Trinidad and Tobago’s Heritage Library Division*” used in the circumstances of the pandemic, to accelerate its shift, in providing digital offer. Beyond this, there are many great freely resources available with educational materials (*notably Open Education Resources (OER) providing access to materials curate by a team of librarians*). Infact UNESCO’s Education Division is also providing links to valuable educational resources, and its archives have a *collection of sound recordings* from the past. In addition to this, *Wikimedia* has set up a project on COVID-19 to manage information on the subject. On the other hand, *the National Library of India*, meanwhile, has developed search engines for OERs for *researchers and young adults* (IFLA, 2020)

### ***Role of Library Professionals***

To provide maximum service to its users is the ultimate aim of a library. Where library professionals constitute an important part of Library (i.e., constitute an important component of the library trinity). By making important contribution to the academic community. Especially the role considered with the ongoing need for access to learning resources to faculty members as well as to the students. Library professionals (Librarians and library staff) are building the image and value of the libraries and make every possible effort(s) to find the appropriate ways to respond the contemporary requirements of the students and faculty to fulfill their goals, meet the needs of existing and potential users. Even the advent of new technology and its application in libraries have opened new vistas for holdings. The provisions of services should meet the requirements of current trends, respecting, identifying and changing demands of more challenging users. Library staff must realize the importance and understanding of new technologies such as YouTube, blogs, wikis attract the young users, provide an opportunity for libraries to revamp services (Patil and Pradhan, 2014). Additionally, the whole practices and services of LIS profession from traditional to digital environment has been transformed due to the rapid growth of information and communication technologies. It also only changes the method of information delivery (Raju, 2014). Showed that the ever emerging big data has become a significant ingredient in the digital environment for smooth functioning of organizations (Khan and Vorley, 2017). Ameen (2008)

discusses all kinds of managerial and practical issues pertaining to collection development and acquisitions to collection management. The paper attempts to explore the relationship between the use of varying collection-related terminologies and ever-emerging forms of scholarly publishing in libraries. It was found that the related emerging terminology has been expanding rapidly because of the direct impact of the never-ending developments, though with the varying use pattern reflects the expansion in the aims and ways of functioning of a modern library. On the other hand, **Shonhe and Jain (2017)** illustrates potential library users have positive attitudes towards technology; they have competent skills to use mobile technology and they access information daily using mobile technology. It is observed that changes in user information needs have put more pressure on the delivery of library services. Text notifications via the use of mobile devices can disseminate information and multimedia content such as videos, images and audio files. Librarians can use this service to alert patrons regarding the latest information on happenings around COVID 19 on how to stay safe or other related information. Furthermore, librarians should serve as catalysts for the effective dissemination of information to promote true knowledge. Librarians should disseminate information via existing and digital media platforms to educate users. For better dissemination of information, especially in a time of great need for accurate health-related information resources in an ever-increasing digital environment, libraries should establish working relationships with health agencies and communication organizations with the objective of cooperative developments of collections, referrals and information shared and learning for users and a new breed of re-imagined librarians (**Okike, 2020**). Thus, libraries, as a social institution, are responsible for ensuring awareness and the provision of up to date information to the users. However, in the age of multiple information sources and diverse communication channels users do not always access the most valid information. It is estimated that there are 11 different types of information sources ranging from valid information to untrusted or doubtful information (**Ashrafi-Rizi & Kazempour, 2019**). Even, *Google Trends* has become a useful tool for monitoring awareness about health at both national and international levels (**Hu & et, al, 2020**). However, strategies, require social acceptance of measures such as school closures, remote working, home isolation, monitoring the health of symptomatic individuals using telephone or online health consultations (**Heymann & Shindo, 2020**). Additionally, quarantine is one of the oldest and most effective tools of controlling communicable disease outbreak. Quarantine was used as an effective step during the pandemic

situation in China. It is also an effective measure to control a pandemic of influenza (**Wilder-Smith & Freedman, 2020**).

## **SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

The study is confined to the *Faculty members, Scholars and Students of selected departments in university of Kashmir, Srinagar. A total of 255 library users have been taken i.e., 85 faculty members, 85 scholars, 85 student comprise the population of the study*) from varied departments (*History, MERC, Sociology, Social work, department of management studies, Economics, Law, Computer science, Electronics and instrumentation, Food science and Technology, Statistics, Chemistry, Earth sciences, Environmental sciences, Education, Psychology, Bioresources, Biotechnology*) of the main campus in the university of Kashmir. The research design employed in the present study is survey method. Under this method, the researchers used a questionnaire using survey monkey for data collection. The data was collected from the participants of the study during the pandemic period through online mode. The level of participation and satisfaction at certain point are measured through likert scale. The data has been analyzed by using the SPSS software to elicit necessary information pertaining to the formulated objectives (research questions).

## ***Hypothesis***

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no active participation of library professionals in satisfying user needs during pandemic situation

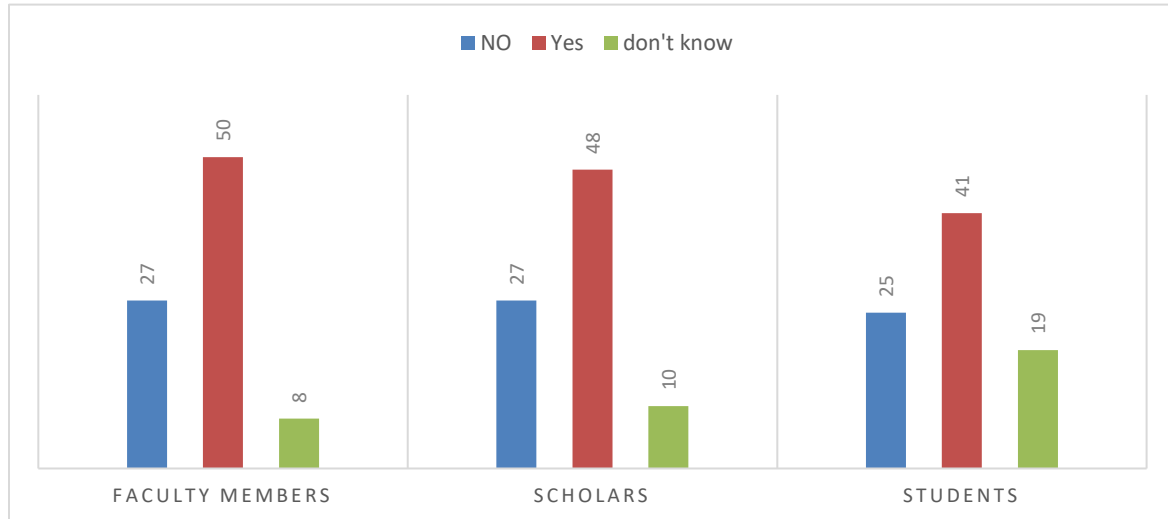
**H<sub>1</sub> :** There is active participation of library professionals in satisfying user needs

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Library users (Faculty members, Researchers, Students) are not satisfied with the present way of information dissemination by professionals (library) in pandemic times

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Library users (Faculty members, Researchers, Students) are satisfied with the present way of information dissemination by professionals (library)

## DATA ANALYSIS

Fig. 01 Remote access to resources during pandemic



The fig 01 shows the usage of e-resources or services by users of libraries, category wise where highest 50 faculty members followed by 48 scholars and 41 students make use of the services provided, 79 users including 27 faculty members, 27 scholars and 25 students don't make use of the services provided and rest 37 users (08 faculty members, 10 scholars and 19 students) don't have knowledge about the services provided.

Fig. 02 Potential reasons for not using resources during pandemic

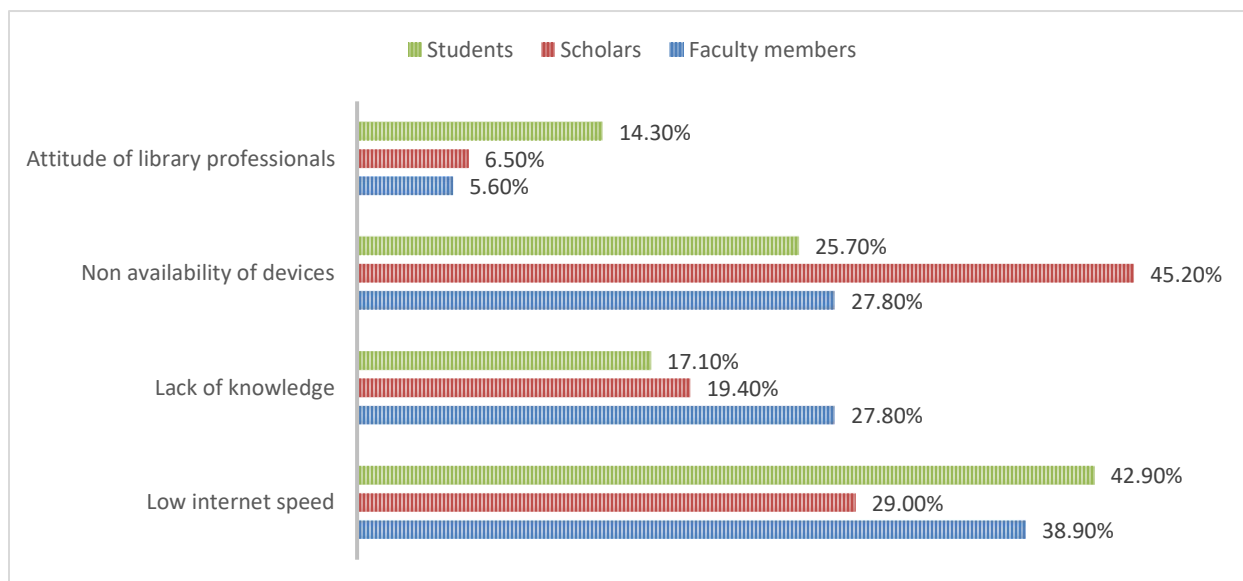
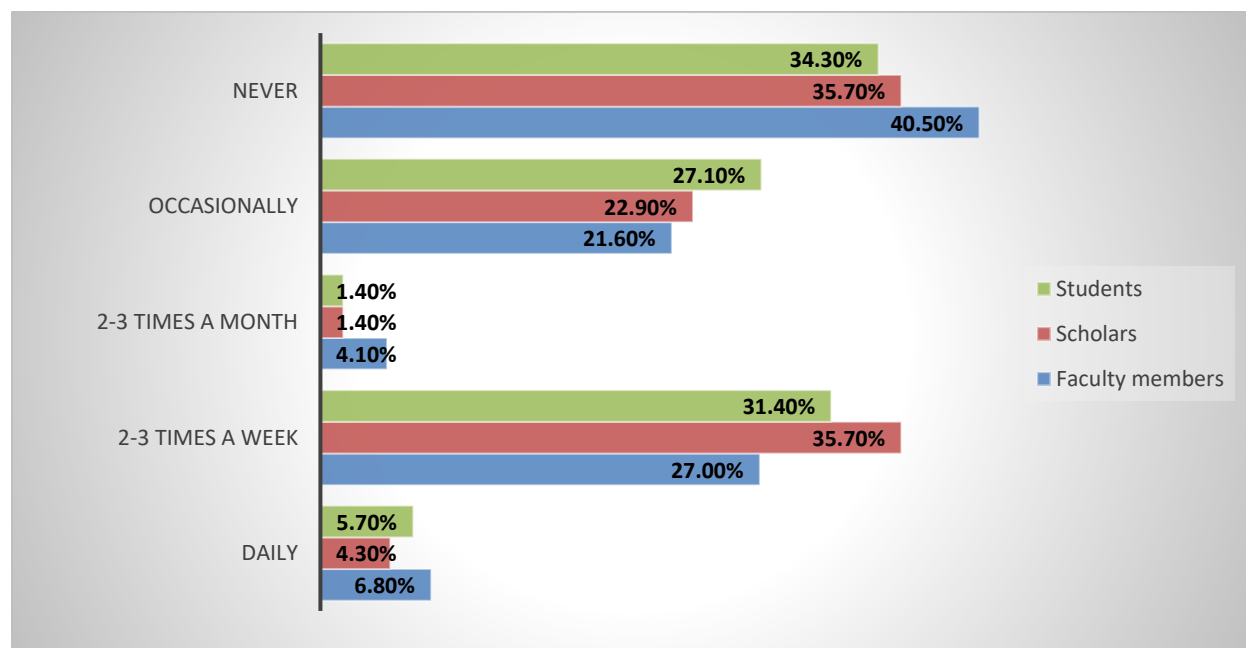


Fig.02 shows the percentage of reasons opted by different category of users which prove hindrance by one or other way in using the services provided where highest 45.20% scholars make no availability of devices (computer/laptop/mobile phone )the reason followed by 42.90% of students give Low internet speed the reason. Attitude of library professionals is the least preferable reason by all categories as 14.30% by students, 6.50% by scholars and 5.60% by faculty members. Non availability of devices and Low internet speed are the most opted reasons by all where Non availability of devices is by 45.20% scholars,27.80% of faculty members and 25.70% students while as Low internet speed is by 29.00% scholars,38.90% of faculty members and 42.90% students.

**Fig. 03 Frequency of service usage during pandemic**



The Fig.03 clearly shows the frequency of using services by different category of users during pandemic highest usage is 35.70% by scholars in category of “2-3 times a weak” followed by 31.40% by students in the same category. It is pitching to see the high graphs in non-usage (never) category of resources which constitute 34.30% of students, 35.70% of scholars and 40.50% of faculty members. On daily basis only 5.70% of students, 4.30% of scholars and 6.80% of faculty members make usage of the resources provided. Occasionally based users are to also good in number which includes 27.10% of students, 22.90% of scholars and 21.60% of faculty members.

Table 01: Purpose of using resources

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Downloading books</b>	<b>Downloading journals</b>	<b>Finding course material</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Faculty members</b>	14	12	8	19	32	<b>85</b>
	16.5%	14.1%	9.4%	22.4%	37.6%	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Scholars</b>	12	9	11	24	29	<b>85</b>
	14.1%	10.6%	12.9%	28.2%	34.1%	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Students</b>	13	12	8	18	34	<b>85</b>
	15.3%	14.1%	9.4%	21.2%	40.0%	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>255</b>
	<b>15.3%</b>	<b>12.9%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	<b>37.3%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 01 shows the category wise purpose of different users of using the services or resources provided during pandemic where 61 users including 19 faculty members, 24 scholars and 18 students make use of the resources for reading purpose. For downloading books and journals we have 72 users in which 39 users (14 faculty members, 12 scholars and 13 students) download books and 33 users (12 faculty members, 09 scholars and 12 students) download journals. 27 users i.e.10.6% of total users make use for finding materials pertaining to the courses studied by them. Other purpose not mentioned here is opted by 37.3% of user population under study which includes 32 faculty members, 29 scholars and 34 students.



**Fig 04: services provided by libraries**

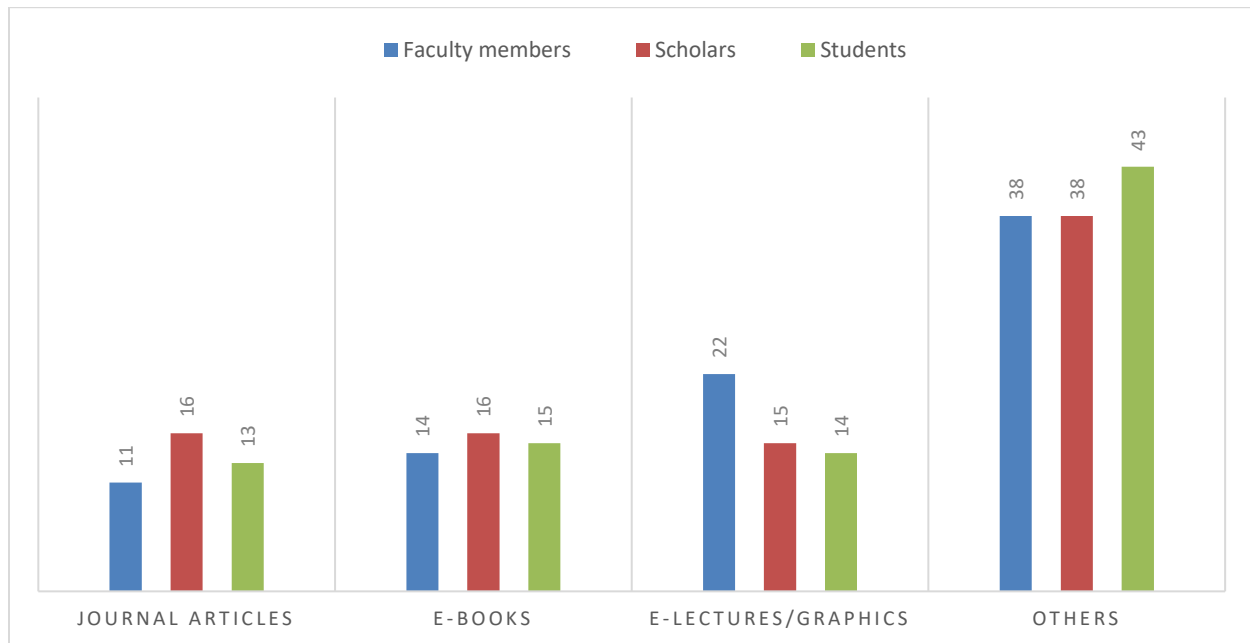


Fig 04 shows the services provided by libraries to its users during pandemic, Journal articles are provided as responded by 40 users which include 11 faculty members, 16 scholars and 13 students. E-books as responded by 45 users (14 faculty members, 16 scholars and 15 students) and E-lectures and Graphics by 51 users (22 faculty members, 15 scholars and 14 students). 119 users opt other services which may include blog, social networking group or page etc. among these users 38 are faculty members, 38 are scholars and 15 are students.

**Fig 05: Assistance provided by library professionals/libraries**

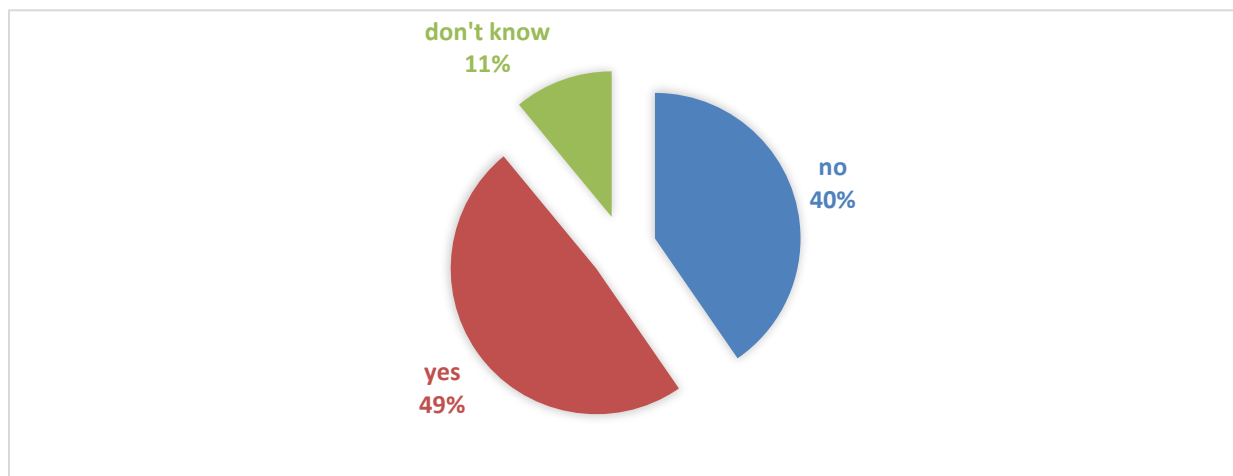


Fig.05 shows that among 255 respondents 124 (48.6%) respondents say “yes” in response to assistance provided by library professionals/libraries during pandemic, among remaining 133 respondents 103 respondents say “no” to assistance provided by library professionals/ libraries and the rest 28 respondents say that they didn’t know about any assistance provided by libraries/library professionals

**Table 02: Type of Assistance provided by library professionals/libraries**

<b>Designation</b>	<b>FAQ</b>	<b>Live assistance</b>	<b>Directing to experts/information sources</b>	<b>other (s)</b>	<b>None of Them</b>	<b>All of them</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Faculty members</b>	22	11	7	0	35	10	<b>85</b>
	25.9%	12.9%	8.2%	.0%	41.2%	11.8%	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Scholars</b>	13	5	14	1	41	11	<b>85</b>
	15.3%	5.9%	16.5%	1.2%	48.2%	12.9%	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Students</b>	15	5	6	3	46	10	<b>85</b>
	17.6%	5.9%	7.1%	3.5%	54.1%	11.8%	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>255</b>
	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>47.8%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 02 shows the different assistance types adopted by library professionals/ libraries in order prove a helping hand to its users regarding the usage of services/resources provided during pandemic where 50 library professionals/ libraries provide FAQ, Live Assistance by 21, Directing to experts/information sources by 27, other type assistance by 04 and All of the assistances mentioned by 31 library professionals/ libraries. The rest 122 library professionals/ libraries that make 47.8% of the total library professionals/ libraries under study don’t make use of any assistance to its users.

**Table 03: Feedback from users**

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Questionnaire</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Social networking</b>	<b>SMS</b>	<b>Other (s)</b>	<b>none</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Faculty members</b>	2	22	23	10	12	16	85
	2.4%	25.9%	27.1%	11.8%	14.1%	18.8%	100.0%
<b>Scholars</b>	3	20	19	9	19	15	85
	3.5%	23.5%	22.4%	10.6%	22.4%	17.6%	100.0%
<b>Students</b>	0	18	19	12	17	19	85
	.0%	21.2%	22.4%	14.1%	20.0%	22.4%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	5	60	61	31	48	50	255
	2.0%	23.5%	23.9%	12.2%	18.8%	19.6%	100.0%

Table 03 shows the feedback from users received pertaining to the services and assistance provided during pandemic. The data collected clearly shows that Social networking adopted by 23.9% libraries/library professionals is the highest adopted medium followed by Email by 23.9% of libraries/library professionals. Questionnaire is used by least number of libraries/library professionals i.e. 2 %. Other mediums which is used by 18.8% of libraries/library professionals may include voice call, blog, letter box etc. 19.6% of libraries/library professionals don't get any type of feedback from its users.

**Fig 06: Capability of Library Staff in assistance**

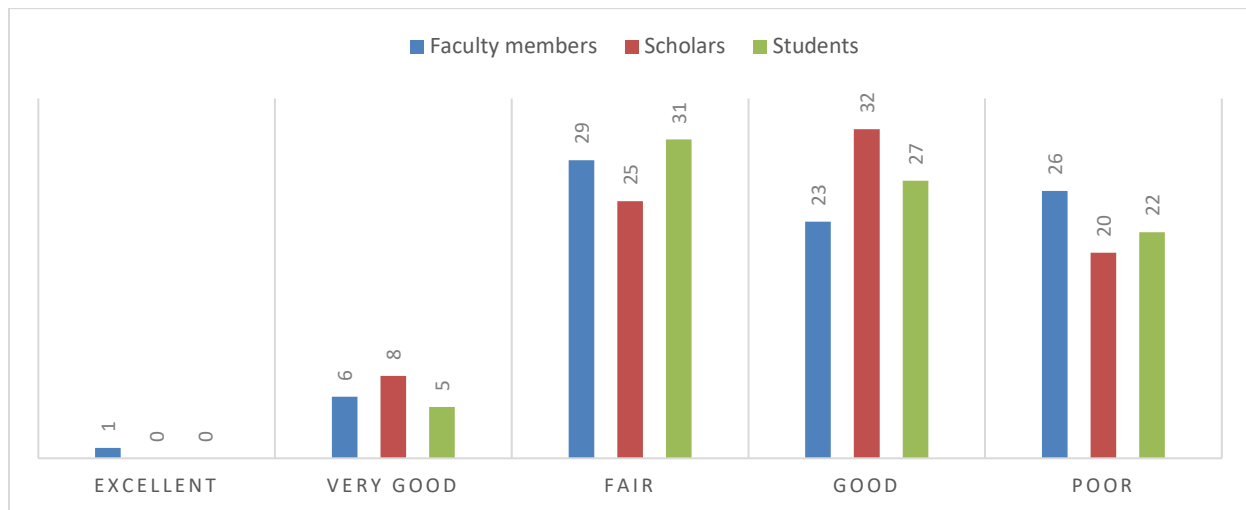
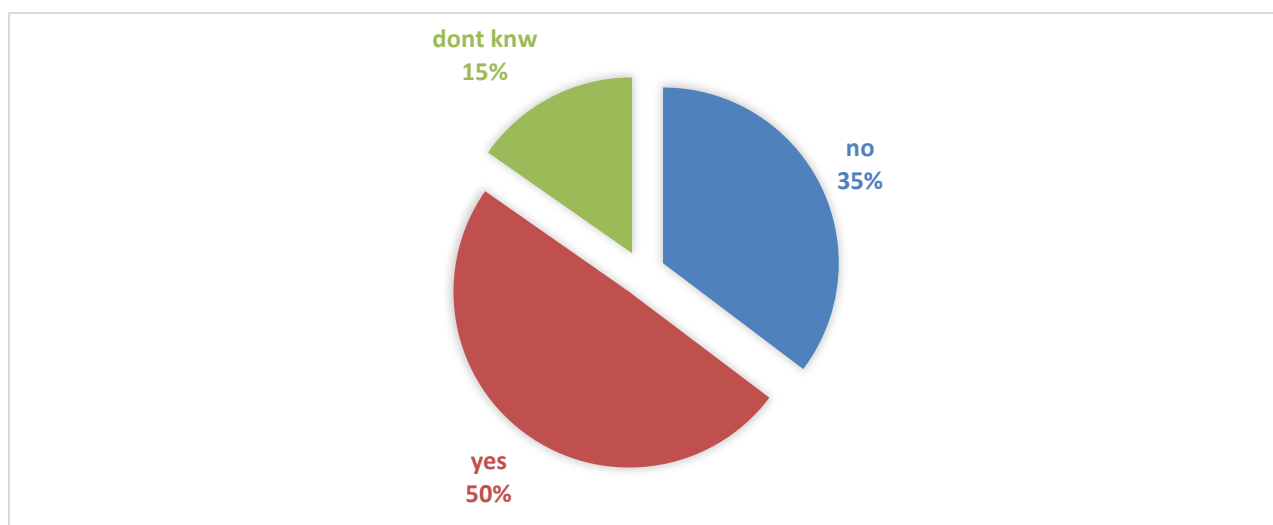


Fig 06 shows the performance of library professionals in providing assistance for usage of resources or services during pandemic. Where we get highest response rate for FAIR and GOOD options, with FAIR 85 responses (29 faculty members, 25 scholars and 31 students) and GOOD with 82 responses (23 faculty members, 32 scholars and 27 students). Very meager responses are for EXCELLENT i.e. 01 and for VERY GOOD i.e. 19 which include 06 faculty members, 08 scholars and 05 students. It is not good to get such a high response rate for the option POOR which is 68 out of 255 which includes 26 from faculty members, 20 from scholars and 22 from students.

**Fig 07: Updates regarding services and resources**



**Table 04: Different Ways of providing Updates**

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Social Networkin g Sites</b>	<b>SMS</b>	<b>Blog</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Faculty members</b>	11	29	8	6	4	<b>58</b>
	19.0%	50.0%	13.8%	10.3%	6.9%	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Scholars</b>	11	23	9	5	6	<b>54</b>
	20.4%	42.6%	16.7%	9.3%	11.1%	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Students</b>	9	24	4	6	6	<b>49</b>
	18.4%	49.0%	8.2%	12.2%	12.2%	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>161</b>
	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>47.2%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Fig 07 and Table 04 are pertaining to the updates provided for the services and resources provided during pandemic to the users of library. Figure shows 50% users out of 255 users responded that they get regular updates while 35% users don't get any updates for the service or resources provided and rest 15% users don't have knowledge regarding updation or not. From different means of providing updates the most preferred one is Social Networking Sites with 76 responses which included 29 from faculty members, 23 from scholars and 24 from students. Least preferred among all is Blog with 17 responses where we get 06 from faculty members, 05 from scholars and 06 from students. Email is opted by 31 users and SMS by 21 users.

**Fig 08: Satisfaction from use of services provided**

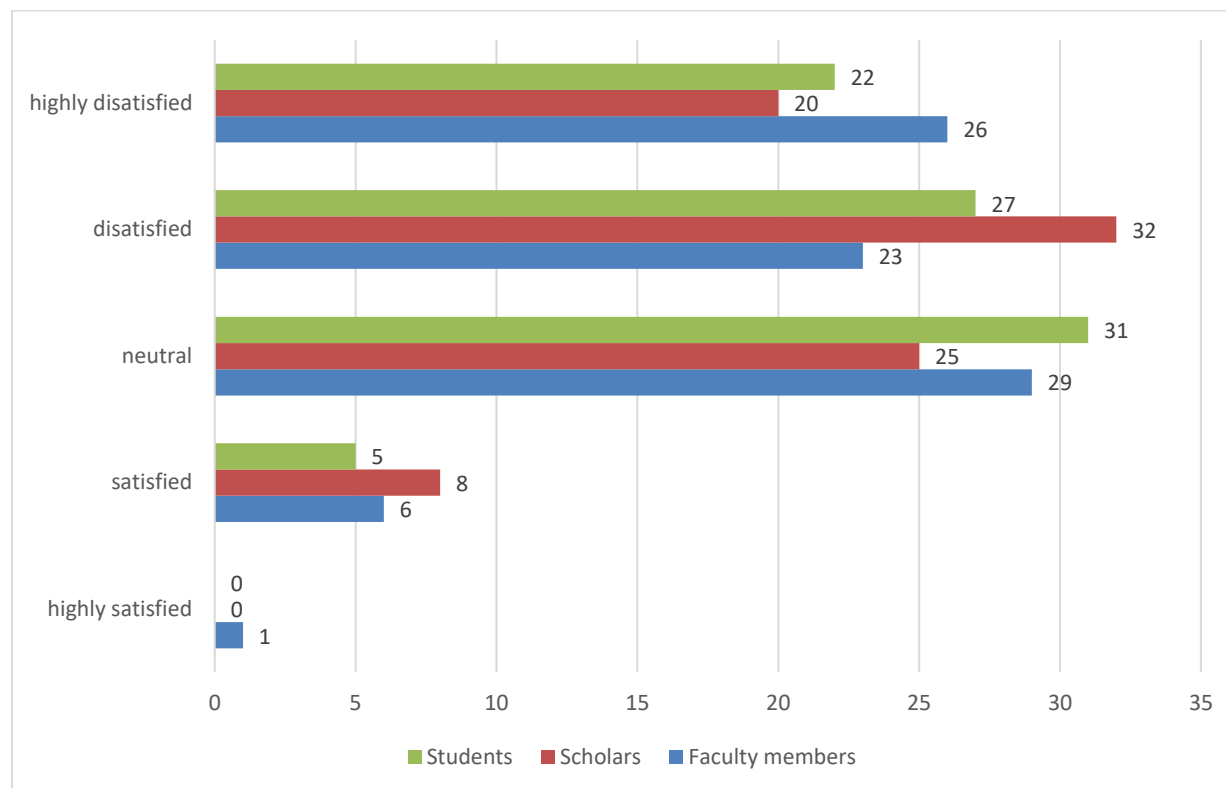


Fig. 07 clearly shows the satisfaction level by different category of users from the use of services or resources provided by libraries/library professionals during pandemic. The response rates are very alarming where we get 85 Responses for neutral, 82 for dissatisfied and 68 for highly dissatisfied. The satisfaction rate is very low where we get one user from faculty members who is highly satisfied and 19 users who are satisfied which includes 06 from faculty members, 08 from scholars and remaining 05 from students.

## DISCUSSION

The whole study was about the use of e-resources/services provided during pandemic, by users of different departments of university of Kashmir in order to fulfill their information needs. The study reveals some expected results and some results are too far from our expectations. The users making use of the e-resources/services provided in all three categories (faculty members, scholars and students) is high but this is not satisfactory as the users not knowing about these e-

resources/services and the users not using these e-resources/services are also in good number. The potential reasons for their non-usage of e-resources/services were also explored where study reveals that 37.3% of the users make “Low internet speed” the reason followed by “Non Availability of the device” by 33% of users and 22% of users make “Lack of Knowledge” the reason. Most of users i.e. 31.3% make use of the e-resources/services 2-3 times a week followed by 23.8% of users who use them occasionally. The study also reveals that disappointing result of users who never make use of these e-resources/services provided is 36.9%, which is very high and need to be decreased. The purpose of consulting these e-resources/services of most of the users is reading and getting information regarding their interests and subjects. Some users consult the e-resources/services for downloading books, journals and finding course material during pandemic as other sources are unavailable during lockdown. Talking about the services provided almost same number of users rounding 50 responded for journal articles, e-books and e-lectures/graphics while 119 users opt other services which may include blog, social networking group or page etc. among these users 38 are faculty members, 38 are scholars and 15 are students. Among 255 respondents 124 (48.6%) respondents say “yes” in response to assistance provided by library professionals/libraries during pandemic and make FAQ the most preferred assistance which is responded by 50 users. The maximum number of users i.e.187 users are satisfied with the assistance provided and rest 68 users make one or the other reason for their dissatisfaction of assistance provided. The updates are also provided by library professionals regarding the e-resources/services provided during pandemic where social networking is most preferred way opted by 76 users making 47.2% of total users followed by email, SMS and blog. At last talking about the user satisfaction from the e-resources/services provided during pandemic we get only 20 users are satisfied 85 are neutral and remaining 150 users are dissatisfied with them.

## **CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION**

From whole study we get there are lags on both sides i.e. user side and professional side, where improvements are needed in order to get the optimum utilization of the e-resources/services provided. We get that all the necessary services are provided by maximum library professionals but lag in some parts may be assistance, updation or making user aware about services. Users know about the services but didn't know the proper ways of extraction of information. So the need of hour is that both parties should know the weaknesses of them and try to improve them for the

betterment of both. Some recommendation that may improve optimum utilization of e-resources/services provided during pandemic are

1. Training programs to library professionals for creation of e-resources/services during pandemic.
2. Making faculty members the part of awareness to e-resources/services during pandemic to students as they are more close to them.
3. Distribution of some devices (mobiles/laptops) to the users who are great need of them and didn't afford due to economic reasons.
4. Training programs to users making them aware of basics of computer and e-resources.
5. Providence of full technical support to users where they feel any difficulty in usage of e-resources/services during pandemic.
6. Online sessions to users for making them aware about ways of information extraction.
7. Constantly looking on the feedbacks provided by users and taking necessary steps for their resolution.
8. Assigning the job of assistance to the library professionals who are sober in nature and have much patience so he/she can tolerate the different type of users.

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